



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Mount Rainier National Park
Superintendent's Office

55210 238th Avenue E.
Ashford, WA 98304-9751
360-569-2211 phone
360-569-2169 fax

Mount Rainier National Park News Release

December 16, 2009

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Lee Snook, West District Interpreter, (360) 569-2211 ext. 6043

Snowplay Area and Guided Snowshoe Walks Available at Paradise in Mount Rainier National Park

Mount Rainier National Park Acting Superintendent Randy King announces that a snowplay area and guided snowshoe walks at the Paradise area in the park will begin December 19.

Snowplay - Sledding and Sliding

The snowplay area is immediately north of the upper parking lot at Paradise. Sliding and sledding in the park is permitted ONLY in this designated area. Snowplay runs are supervised daily by Park Rangers from December 19 through January 3, and on weekends and holidays from January 9 through March 28. Visitors may use the runs when the area is not staffed, but the runs are not groomed during the week. For current snowplay status, contact the Longmire Museum at 360-569-2211 ext. 3314 (9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. daily).

Because of the high potential for personal injury and frequency of accidents, no other areas of the park are open to sliding activities. Serious injuries have occurred when people mistakenly slid over waterfalls, into trees, down slopes that were too steep, broke through thin snow into stream gorges, or slammed into other people. Skiing and snowboarding are permitted in other areas, outside of the snowplay area.

For your enjoyment and safety, these few guidelines apply:

- Use only inner tubes, plastic sleds, saucers, or other soft sliding devices. No wooden toboggans, runner sleds with metal edges, or other hard devices are permitted.
- Compressed air is available at the rock restroom tunnel across the plaza from the new Jackson Visitor Center when snowplay rangers are present.
- Be sure the run is clear before starting your slide. Collisions may cause serious injury.
- Dress warmly and in layers with a wicking fabric such as wool or polypropylene next to the skin and a waterproof outer layer. Wear a hat, gloves, and snow-sealed boots. Do not wear lightweight blue jeans and t-shirts. They get wet easily and will not keep you warm.
- Rest, re-warm, and snack frequently to help keep you comfortable and alert. Take a warm-up break at the Jackson Visitor Center before feet, hands, noses, or ears feel numb. Food service is available from 11 a.m. to 4:45 p.m. when the visitor center is open.
- The snowplay area is usually closed by 4:30 p.m. nightly.

Snowshoe Walks

Join a Park Ranger to learn the art of snowshoeing and discover the ecology of the Paradise area. During the holiday break, the guided walks will be offered daily December 19 through January 3. From January 9 through March 28 the walks will be conducted on weekends and holidays only. The walks are offered at 12:30 p.m. and 2:30 p.m. on a first-come, first-served basis. Sign up at the Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center at Paradise beginning one hour before the start time.

-MORE-

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA

The National Park Service cares for special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

Organized groups of 13-25 people may reserve a snowshoe walk in advance. Group snowshoe walks begin at 10:30 a.m. For more information or to make a group reservation, call (360) 569-2211, ext. 3314.

Snowshoe walks cover approximately 1.5 miles and last up to 2 hours. Snowshoes are provided, or visitors may use their own. A donation of \$1-\$4 per person is asked to help defray the cost of snowshoe maintenance. Snowshoeing is a moderately strenuous activity, and participants must be at least 8 years old. Remember to wear sturdy boots and dress in layers.

Educational Snowshoe Walks for School Groups

Curriculum-based snowshoe education walks are available at no charge to school groups on weekdays through the park's Education Program. These programs are tailored to meet the teacher's identified learning objectives. Contact Fawn Bauer at (360) 569-6037 for more information or to schedule your field trip.

Please check the Mount Rainier National Park website at <http://www.nps.gov/mora/forteachers/index.htm> for more information about field trips and teacher workshops.

Facility Hours

The Longmire Museum (360-569-2211, extension 3314) is open daily from 9:00 a.m. through 4:30 p.m. The Henry M. Jackson Visitor Center (360-569-2211, extension 6036) is open from 10:00 a.m. through 5:00 p.m. during holiday break (December 19 through January 3) and on weekends and holidays through March 28.

Visitors are reminded that roads in the park may be closed at any time due to hazardous conditions. When driving on park roads, please use caution as the roads are icy, narrow, and steep. Carry chains at all times and pay attention to changing conditions. General park information is available at www.nps.gov/mora or by calling 360-569-2211.

-NPS-